



# Rediscovering India

## 1961-2011



Archaeological Survey of India  
Government of India



Ever since its inception in 1861 Archaeological Survey of India has remained the torch bearer of archaeological research in the Indian sub-continent. It has now completed 150 years of its successful and glorious existence during which it has unfolded multifarious aspects of culture contributing to the reconstruction of Indian history. But the last 50 years (1961-2011) have been remarkable for its achievements as the archaeological map of the country became comprehensive due to intense upgradation of the data base. This became possible by prolific increase in the number of explored as well as excavated sites and by adopting a multidisciplinary approach of study involving different streams of science and technology which facilitated accuracy in dating and analyzing the archaeological finds alongwith its context, implications and environment. During the last five decades interesting archaeological discoveries were made by different research institutions. The exhibition highlights the exploration and excavation activities encompassing all periods of human creativity as undertaken by Archaeological Survey of India in the aforesaid period.

When the quadruped man became bipedal, the opposing thumbs of liberated fore-arms empowered him to make tools in stone which improved his ability to meet the survival needs. This event of great consequence occurred in India about 1.5 million years ago and triggered the evolutionary process of man—steering him much ahead of the rest of animals. The Prehistoric era when the early man used stone tools for functional purpose is known as the Stone Age in which he was essentially a food gatherer. Bone tools later appeared as additional equipments in the Stone Age. On the basis of stone tools, the Stone Age is classified into three periods: Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic. The Palaeolithic age is further divided into three sub periods-Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic. The earliest and largest rough stone tools were prepared in the lower Palaeolithic age. Later, with the advancement of primitive technology, the tools became smaller, smoother and finer. Scraper, borer, burin, point and blade are some of other remarkable categories of stone tools. The polished celts are characteristic of the

Neolithic age while the microliths first appeared in the Mesolithic period.

In the last 50 years Archaeological Survey of India has excavated many sites unearthing early stone tools. Anangpur (Haryana), Attirampakkam (Tamilnadu) and Lalitpur (U.P) have yielded hand axes, cleavers and scrapers in quartzite or granite. The Middle Palaeolithic hand axes and scrapers, small in size, reported from Adam Khan-ka-Dera (Rajasthan) are in basalt. The microliths from Bhimbetka belonging to the Mesolithic period are in chalcedony.

With the advent of the Neolithic period, the life style of man changed qualitatively. This period is marked with the emergence of agriculture, settled life, domestication of animals and plants, handmade as well as wheel-made. Burzahom, Gufkral and Kanispor in Jammu and Kashmir are key sites excavated by Archaeological Survey of India where the Neolithic remains including celts, axes, adzes and harvesters in stone and points, harpoons and needles in bone apart from pottery have been found.

At around 3000 BCE man learnt the art of metallurgy, enabling him to make use of metals like copper and bronze to begin with. This ushered in the Bronze age or the Copper age which saw two parallel cultural developments – an urban Harappan civilization and a rural Chalcolithic culture. However, there is a third distinct segment of the Chalcolithic age popularly known as the Copper Hoard Culture manifested through finds occurring mostly in hoards. The anthropomorphic figurines, shouldered celts, harpoons and antenna swords of copper represent a few shapes of the assemblage.

The Harappan culture is characterized by a meticulous town planning, homogenous layout throughout the territorial spread, perfect drainage system, well developed trade and a distinct pictographic script, though it is not yet deciphered. The loss of territory by India due to the partition at the time of independence resulted in transfer of all important Harappan sites to Pakistan. To compensate it, special efforts were made after independence to locate The





**Archaeological Site**  
Anangpur



**Hand Axe**  
Anangpur



**Ovate**  
Attirampakkam



**Hand Axe**  
Adam-Khan-ka-Dera



**Scraper**  
Adam-Khan-ka-Dera



**Celt**  
Burzahom



**Harvester**  
Gufkral



**Needle**  
Burzahom



**Point**  
Burzahom



Harappan culture within the Indian territory which were very fruitful. A series of sites having the Harappan affiliation came to light with very encouraging results. These included Kalibangan, Bhirrana, Banawali, Ropar, Baror, Dhalewan, Mandi, Sanauli, Rakhigarhi, Dholavira, Khirsara, Surkotda, Hulas, Alamgirpur, Bhagwanpura, etc. Kalibangan revealed all fabrics of the Harappan pottery alongwith an Early Harappan level. A distinguishing achievement was the discovery of a ploughed field showing a grid of furrows, which perhaps is the earliest ploughed field unearthed so far. Among the rich harvest of antiquities from Banawali, the most important find is a complete clay model of plough. Bhirrana brought to light the gradual evolution of a complex Harappan culture from the Hakra period to the Mature Harappan. The dockyard discovered at Lothal is another notable find.

A painted miniature goblet from Lothal is a very interesting find as the painting probably narrates the popular folk story of "Thirsty crow". The dishes on stand from Ropar represent a characteristic pottery of Harappan period. Terracotta human figurines, terracotta triangular cakes and steatite button seals from Baror in Rajasthan are other interesting finds. The site is located on the right bank of the dried up Saraswati river.

Important finds from Dhalewan in Punjab include copper axe, terracotta gamesman (double headed bull) and a cubical weight of stone. Mandi in Uttar Pradesh is a very remarkable site from where a lot of gold ornaments of the Harappan period have been found which include armlets and beads.

Gold ornaments have also been reported from Khirsara in Gujarat. Copper antenna sword from Sanauli and a copper mirror from Rakhigarhi are the evidence of exemplary metallurgy of the Harappan period.

Dholavira has yielded massive stone structures and seven cultural stages, documenting the rise and fall of the Harappan culture. The site shot into prominence due to its amazing water harvesting system, a large ten lettered sign board



**Clay Model of Plough**  
Banawali



**Seal**  
Dholavira



**A Vase, the painting on which appears to narrate the story of 'Thirsty Crow'**  
Lothal



**Necklace**  
Gold, Khirsara



**Armlet**  
Gold, Mandi

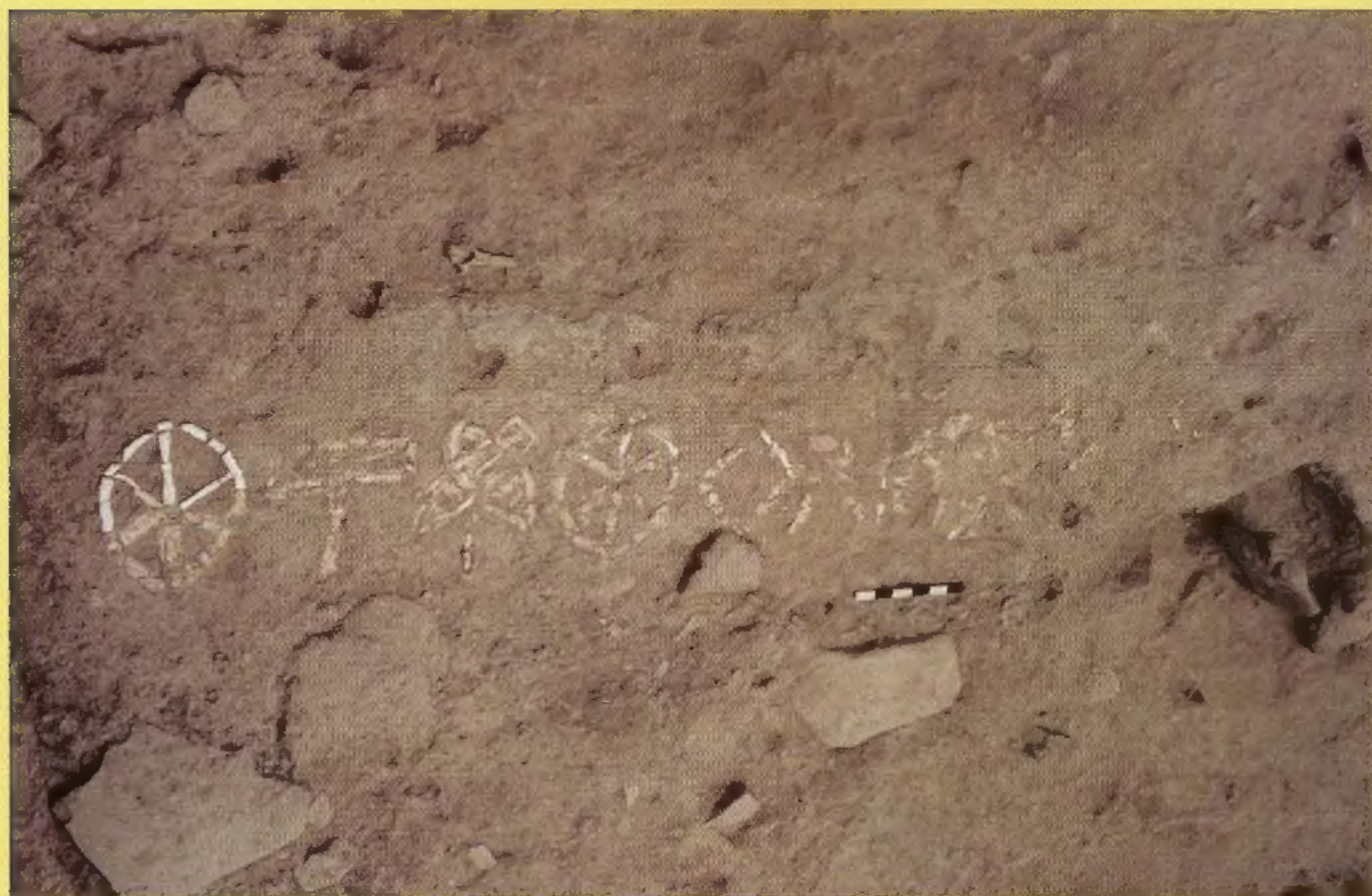


**Copper Antenna Sword**  
Sanauli





**Excavated Remains**  
Dholavira



**Shell-inlaid Sign Board**  
Dholavira



inlaid with shell, beads of different shapes like circular, cylindrical, oval, rectangular, etc. made up of semi precious stones like jasper, carnelian, turquoise, agate, onyx, amazonite, chalcedony, vesuvianite, chert, etc. Among the metallic finds mentions may be made of axes, celts and animal figurines of copper and a chisel of bronze. Seals of steatite and soapstone, stone weights and pottery of different shapes were also found. Terracotta mother goddesses and animal figurines are abundant. These continued to be a favourite subject of expressing artistic skill in almost all periods of history. From a cemetery at Sanauli (U.P.) have been found antenna swords of copper which are associated with the Copper Hoard Culture. The ceramic assemblage of Sanauli is also quite rich.

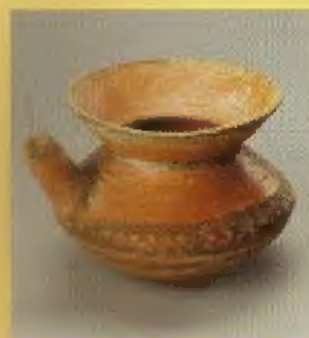
A good number of Chalcolithic sites have been excavated with encouraging results. Some of them are : Daimabad, Ahar, Malwa, Kayatha, Chichali, etc. At a few sites like Ramapuram and Kesarpalli, excavation has brought to light a Neo-Chalcolithic level. Excavations at Daimabad were very significant as they yielded Jorwe, Malwa, Savalda as well as a distinct local Harappan level. The Chalcolithic ceramic assemblage of Chichali (M.P.) belongs to Ahar, Malwa and Jorwe Cultures. A *parasu* shaped object and a chisel of copper ascribed to the Malwa period are noteworthy. A terracotta cow figurine from Ojijana (Rajasthan) and a chalcedony blade from Khaparkheda (M.P.) also belong to the Chalcolithic Culture.

At around 1500 BCE man started using iron which is a commonly found metal in India and therefore very appropriate for mass production. Gradually copper was replaced by iron as the major metal for utilitarian purposes. This period marks the Iron Age in India and also encompasses a characteristically unique Megalithic culture in which many objects of utility were put in the burials under the concept of "life after death".

While the early Iron Age sites are associated with Painted Grey Ware, the Megalithic sites are characterized by Black-and-Red Ware.



**Addorsed Bull**  
Banawali



**Spouted Jorwe ware**  
Daimabad



**Cow Figurine**  
Terracotta, Ojijana



**Bowl**  
Black-and-Red Ware  
Adichchanallur



**Ring Stand**  
Black slipped ware  
Adichchanallur



**Beads**  
Carnelian, Siruthavur





**Buddha in *abhayamudra***  
Mathura



**Mould**  
Terracotta, Sravasti

Chak 86 (Rajasthan) has yielded Painted Grey Ware, beads of terracotta and semi-precious stones like quartz, carnelian, agate and lapis lazuli. Excellent beads of carnelian have also been recovered from the burial site at Siruthavur. Kadanad burials have brought to light iron implements like dagger, battle axe and knife. The Black-and-Red Ware bowl and a ring stand from Adichchanallur are also noteworthy.

With the advent of 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE which marks the beginning of the Early Historic period, a second phase of urbanization sets in India with concomitant formation of political states, establishment of dynastic rules and a spurt in trade and commerce with the introduction of coinage. This period also saw a revolutionary change in the society due to the appearance of two major religions of mass popularity – Buddhism and Jainism. Brahmi and Kharoshti scripts, which have been used for inscriptions, originated in this very period. A landmark contribution of this period is the introduction of large sculptures in stone with continuation of terracotta and metal figurines. Indian art reached a credible height with origin and development of various schools of art like Mathura, Gandhara, Amaravati and Sarnath due to the variety in popular themes and development of technology. In the last 50 years, Archaeological Survey of India has excavated many sites of the Early Historical period. Some such important sites are Satdhara, Purana Qila, Hathab, Khaparkheda, Sringaverpur, Malhar, Mathura, Bhagwanpura, Vaishali, Sravasti, Siswania, Harwan, Thaneswar, Dhalewan, Sanghol, Lathiya, Bangarh, Ajanta, Bagh caves, Dumdum, Kondapur, etc. Amongst others objects from the Early Historic period are human and animal figurines in terracotta, kaolin and stone, gold ornaments, plaques, stamps, beads, a conch, a copper plate, an inscribed stone slab and pottery. Terracotta tiles from Harwan and Indo-Greek gold coins from Sanghol are unique finds. From Mathura we have found an artistic sandstone sculpture of standing Buddha in *abhayamudra*. From Lathiya we have a terracotta snake and a Naigameshi figurines. Gold ornaments from Hathab are quite interesting. A terracotta horse rider from Purana Qila and the stone fragments of an elephant from Satdhara belong to the Mauryan period. Terracotta moulds



from Sravasti and Mathura throw light on the way some of these figures were made.

Some interesting and beautiful figurines of terracotta are animals from Khaparkheda, Kuber and divinities (Siva, Hariti) from Sringaverpur, a mother goddess and bulls from Mathura, plaques from Siswania, a human head and a plaque of female from Vaishali, Mahisasurmardini from Ajanta, the head of a ram from Dhalewan etc. The Kaolin figures from Kondapur belonging to Satvahana period are excellent. Among them there are caparisoned horses, *mithuna* figures and human heads. Other interesting objects are a pendant of horn from Khaparkheda, a terracotta sealing from Malhar, terracotta sealings from Piprahwa bearing the name of Kapilvastu, a bird shaped rattle of terracotta and a shell-beads garland from Dhalewan, a conch, finial and a stamp with handle of a terracotta from Sanghol, a terracotta sprinkler from Mathura, a terracotta composite figure from Bangarh, terracotta ritual objects (laddles) from Thaneswar, copper seal cum ring from Lathiya and a Roman gold coin from Ajanta. A stone inscription and a copper plate from Bagh caves are important epigraphical finds.

At the end of the Early Historical period in about 8<sup>th</sup> century CE, disintegrated into smaller regional kingdoms and principalities. The stone sculptures as well as metal images diversified into regional styles producing a wide spectrum of artistry and craftsmanship. The Pallavas, Chalukya, Rashtrakuta, Chola, Ganga, Chandela, Pala and Sena are some of the significant dynasties with styles of their own in sculptural art-independent or as integral parts of architecture.

Sirpur has reported very exquisite bronze images of Brahmanical as well as Buddhist deities belonging to the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century CE. A bowl, a vase and a cylindrical relic casket of brass belonging to the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century CE were reported from Sekta.

A gold coin of Yadava period found from the Daultabad excavation is a very rare find. A coin mould of the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century CE was found from Ellora. The sandstone lintel and door jambs from Bishokhar belonging to Pratihara period



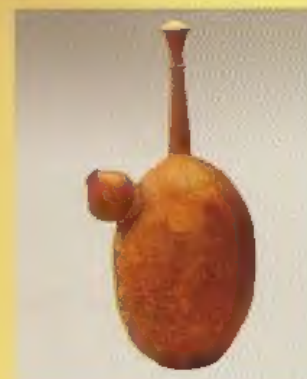
**Caparisoned Horse**  
Ganwarla



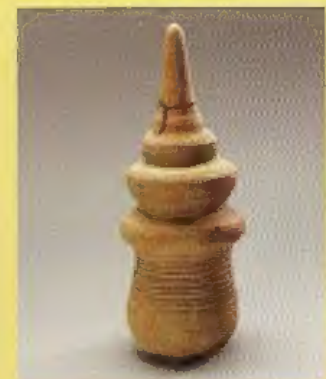
**Caparisoned Horse**  
Kondapur



**Animal Shaped Pendant**  
Khaparkheda



**Sprinkler**  
Mathura



**Finial**  
Sanghol



**Rattle**  
Dhalewan



**Laddle**  
Thaneshwar



**Romain Gold Coin**  
Ajanta







**Manjusri**  
Sirpur



**Relic Casket**  
Sekta



**Door Jamb**  
Bisokhar



(8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century CE) bear very fine and minute decorations.

The medieval history of India largely represents the phase of Islamic domination under Sultanate and Mughal rulers alongwith contemporary regional power bases like Hoysalas and Vijayanagar in Karnataka, Nayakas in Tamil Nadu. Islam brought to India a drastically different concept of religious philosophy and life style. The art of Islamic calligraphy came to this land and was nurtured by Indian artists in Arabic and Persian epigraphs, coins and manuscripts. Mosques, tombs, *dargah* or *mazar* were new additions to the architectural variety. Magnificent forts and palaces were other distinguished constructions. Miniature paintings became popular in Islamic as well as Hindu traditions. International connections with West Asia and China influenced the art, architecture and utility items. Persian glazed tiles and Chinese porcelain became popular and local glazed ware appeared in imitation. Inscriptions and coins with Arabic and Persian scripts came into mass usages. However, the indigenous mode of art traditions in terracotta, metal or other mediums continued and progressed in its own way at popular levels.

The stone sculptures of Vishnu, Gajalakshmi and Siva from Naranag, Ganesha from Lalkot are examples of medieval craftsmanship. The bronzes of Buddha, Tara and Garuda are representatives of metallic sculptures. Gold ear ornaments from Bekal Fort and Vijayanagar elaborate the task of ornamentation in the Medieval period.

The golden bee studded with eleven gems found from Vijayanagar is especially attractive. Lalkot has yielded a lamp stand and a *lota* of terracotta which are objects of daily use. Other terracotta objects are represented by a large finial, human and animal figurines from Lalkot.

Excavations at Kotla Firoz Shah, New Delhi have brought to light beautiful Chinese porcelain pottery with very fine painted designs belonging to the Sultanate period. Local glazed ware dishes belonging to the Sultanate period have been unearthed in Lalkot excavation.



**Tara**  
Bihar



**Ganesha**  
Lalkot



**Gold Ear -ornament**  
Bekal Fort



**Golden Bee**  
Hampi





**Lampstand**  
Lalkot



**Bowl**  
Kotla Firoz Shah, Delhi



**Male Head**  
Residency, Lucknow



**Tobacco Pipe**  
Salimgarh Fort, Delhi



**Buddha**  
Bodhgaya, Bihar

The Europeans entered India in the seventeenth century, initially in pursuit of trade and commerce but later on they struggled for political supremacy, taking advantage of instability and weaknesses of Indian rulers. Britain emerged successful in the race by outpacing France, Portugal, Spain and Holland. The establishment of British domination and their ascendancy to the political power in the nineteenth century marks the Modern period of Indian History. A series of large buildings, churches and convents got constructed in the classical western architectural style like Gothic, Doric, Corinthian, etc.

The sculptures carved in stone, metal, wood and stucco were designed in the typical western format having strong and robust body with special emphasis on physical features. Paintings also followed the same tradition. The western lifestyle pervaded the spheres of dress, costume, weaponry and belongings, especially of the elite class. Nevertheless, the native lifestyle and traditions with all regional variations continued to be present in the mainstream of public life. Princely states of Avadh, Gwalior, Maratha, Mysore, etc. had their own styles of costumes and articles.

Hats on a terracotta male and a female head, the long coat of a terracotta British officer and the drapery of a terracotta female dancer, all from the Residency, Lucknow, depict clear marks of the European attire. The tobacco pipes of China clay from Salimgarh Fort, the one with a human head at the end, represent the European influence on utilitarian objects.

Some retrieved antiquities, which are marvelous specimens of Indian Art, also found space in the exhibition.

These are stone image of Buddha from Bodhgaya, Bihar (c. 7<sup>th</sup> century CE) and Lakulish from Jageshwar, Uttarakhand (c. 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century CE). We have also included a number of confiscated antiquities remarkable among which are Surya from Rajasthan (c. 8<sup>th</sup> century CE), stone statue of a damsel from Madhya Pradesh (c. 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century CE), and subjugation



of Nalagiri by Buddha from Bihar (c. 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century CE). A terracotta gana image from Uttar Pradesh (c. 5<sup>th</sup> century CE) is also included. Fibre replicas of relief panels from Kanaganahalli near Sannati in Karnataka, originally in limestone, are other significant components of this exhibition. The upper segment of one panel portrays king Asoka with his consort, bearing the label "Raya Asoka". It is a landmark discovery of Indian history having the first sculptural representation of the great Mauryan King.

Altogether 307 antiquities including four replicas are on display in the exhibition which project a comprehensive survey of investigations undertaken by Archaeological Survey of India in the last 50 years (1961-2011) as a part of the 150<sup>th</sup> year celebration of Archaeological Survey of India.



**Damsel**  
Madhya Pradesh

Right: **Raya Asoka**  
Front Cover: **Mother Goddess**





